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reform in Illinois. The misdeeds of the state board of equalization are unimpressively mentioned; the outrageous injustice in assessments which at present prevails is but little emphasized; and the administrative defects are, for the most part, passed by. No attempt is made to formulate a constructive program of reform.

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Minimum Rates in the Chain-making Industry. By R. H. TAWNEY.
(Studies in the Minimum Wage, No. 1.) London: G. Bell & Sons, 1914. 12mo, pp xiii+177. 1s. 6d.

Many students who are familiar with Mr. Tawney's study of the *Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* will be glad to know that his skill in analyzing social conditions is to be devoted, in some measure, to present-day problems. This volume is the first of a series of "Studies in the Minimum Wage" in which Mr. Tawney proposes to examine some of the attempts which have recently been made in England to establish and enforce minimum rates of wages under the Trade Boards act of 1909. Up to the present time, as Mr. Tawney points out, the subject of the minimum wage has been dealt with either from the standpoint of economic theory or from that of administrative machinery. Now it has become possible to deal with the social and economic effects of actual experiments in fixing minimum rates, and "whatever may be thought of the policy of 'the minimum wage,' it will be agreed that the subject is sufficiently important to deserve study in the light of such experience as is available." The chain trade is dealt with in this first study partly because it was the first industry to which the Trade Boards act was applied and partly because it was a trade relatively easy to investigate because of its concentration in a small area. The reader is warned, however, that if there is such a thing as a "representative industry" it is certainly not to be found in the chain trade, which is far from being typical even of the majority of the industries to which the Trade Boards act has been extended.

A few of the results of Mr. Tawney's investigation may be noted briefly as follows: The practice of the Trade Board in this industry has been "characterized by a caution surpassing that of government departments," and the actual proceedings of the Board show that there has been no foundation in fact for the fear that the new system of determining wages might result in hasty and ill-advised action "in rashly

thrusting an iron rod into the mechanism of industry" (p. 36). In chap. vi, which deals with the effect of the Chain Trade Board on wages and earnings, some important consequences of the improved condition of the workers, both men and women, are pointed out. For example, trade-unionism among both has been strengthened; and workers in other trades in the same section have been stimulated, by the examples of the chain trade, to make new efforts to increase wages in their own industry. It is pointed out that the Trade Board has "checked the wild fluctuations in the workers' earnings which used previously to take place, and has given a new security to their standard of life, which, though it may still be low, is no longer so entirely precarious as it was before" (p. 58); and it is also noted that there is little evidence that the minimum wage tends in the chain-making industry to become the maximum. Chap. vii, which deals with the effect of the new system on the manufacture of chain, shows that inquiry among both workers and employers indicates that there has been no decrease in the numbers employed; on the contrary, "more are employed than at any previous time" (p. 106). It appears that the increase in wages has been met to some extent by an increase in prices, though we are warned that the chain trade must not be taken as typical in this respect. In this trade there is little foreign competition, and united action is facilitated by the concentration of the trade in a narrow area; this, together with the fact that most of the chain affected is made in homes or small workshops, "diminishes the opportunity which exists in many trades of meeting an advance in wages by a reorganization of the methods of production" (p. 108). That is, since there is next to no management, economies connected with management can hardly be introduced.

With regard to the administration of the act, Mr. Tawney explains that anything like systematic inspection is out of the question with the small staff of the Trade Boards Office, which consists in all of twenty-five persons. But he thinks there is no reason to believe that the new minimum rates are evaded to any serious extent in this particular industry. He points out that the authorities responsible for staffing the Trade Boards Office appear "to have learned nothing from the history of Factory and Workshops Acts administration, and to be determined to thrust upon the investigating officers of the Trade Boards the same impossible task that was placed upon the early factory inspectors" (p. 126).

EDITH ABBOTT